DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

HOW TO UNPLUG AND GET YOUR LIFE BACK



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Introduction

There's no doubt that technological advancements, especially the internet, has made the world a better place. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have made the world a global village where online social interactions occur. We can now have friends in nations we've never been to and may never visit. It also provides endless opportunities for trading and business expansion. Therefore, social media is indeed a blessing for interpersonal and professional relationships.

Nonetheless, this blessing is a curse for many people. Social media isn't evil; however, its abuse, just like medications, can be disastrous. Many people are battling social media addiction today, such that they are anxious when they don't have access to their phones. Some people cannot imagine not using their phones for a day. Meanwhile, social media platforms are full of disturbing content that affects people's mental health. So, it's vital that you've control over your social media use. What you need is a social media detox.

Unfortunately, many people that would've loved to regulate their social media use don't know how to execute this plan. If you're one such person, you're reading the right material. This book is a complete guide that explains social media addiction, its ills, and how to control it. Therefore, you need to pay attention to every page while reading because this book has the potential to be life-changing. You'll find quality information that'll enable you to disconnect to reconnect. Are you ready to get your life on track? Here you go!

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS DIGITAL DETOX?



Chapter 1 - What is Digital Detox?

Activities such as yoga and meditation are gaining more prominence because they help people to attain inner tranquility. More people need them because it's becoming more challenging to focus in the modern world, thanks to the myriad of devices and fancy toys we possess. It's difficult to find a teenager in the 21^{st} century without a mobile phone. Access to the internet is increasingly easier and cheaper. Indeed, it has many advantages. Nonetheless, its negative impacts are also numerous.

One of the ills of social media addiction is a lack of focus. Meanwhile, you cannot have maximum performance when you've issues with attention. So, it's critical that you've control over your use of social media, and that's why you need a digital detox. This chapter will explore how social media use can go wrong and how you can reconnect to your true self again.

Stats on Social Media Addiction

Indeed, social media platforms are parts and parcel of the modern world. We all want to be connected to people in other parts of the world through these mediums. However, when you don't control the time you spend on these platforms, it will affect your productivity.

Social media addiction is a severe issue that's ruining many people's potential. Many people are immersed in the digital world such that they struggle to get to grips with the real world. Some people have friends on these platforms but struggle to commit to or maintain quality interpersonal and social interactions.

The stats regarding social media use and abuse are startling, if not terrifying. For example, the Nielsen Company reported that the average US adult spends around eleven hours interacting with media daily! This duration includes reading, listening, and watching videos.

This analysis shows that an average US adult spends almost half a day in the digital world! Meanwhile, many people spend around fourteen to sixteen hours interacting with digital devices, especially during holidays. Instead of using leisure periods for building a

robust bond with loved ones, many people spend them in the digital world.

Moreover, this statistic is mindboggling because it reveals that many people only have around twelve hours left to sleep, eat, work, and interact with loved ones. Many people claim that they don't have time for social activities, hobbies, and regular exercise. Besides, some people also struggle to have sufficient sleep because of their social media activities.

Meanwhile, the Sleep Foundation recommends that you should sleep between seven to nine hours a day. So, such people will not be able to have enough rest for optimum performance in their daily tasks. There're many reasons you need to consider giving up your phone and devices for a while. For example, you may want to enjoy more personal time without interference.

You may also feel that your device use is becoming excessive and increasing your stress and anxiety level. According to a poll conducted by Common Sense Media, 50% of teenagers admitted that they were addicted to their mobile devices. This report also revealed that 78% of the respondents check their digital devices every hour.

The Dark Side of Social Media

Despite its multiple benefits, there's a dark side to social media use. Indeed, these platforms aren't evil, but people can misuse them to hurt others and also hurt themselves. The unpleasant results of social media abuse are as follows:

Insensitive Comments due to Anonymity

Social media platforms allow people to register without using their real names. This anonymity empowers people to say insensitive things that can make others depressed. Many people don't realize that Twitter followers or Facebook friends have many reasons for associating with them. Some of these people you meet online don't care about you or how you feel. Many people say things online that they will never dare to say to you in physical interaction.

Body Shaming

If you're not careful, the media can make you feel horrible about your body shape, especially if you're fat. It's becoming increasingly embarrassing to call people "fat" because of the barrage of media abuse associated with the word.

Moreover, plus size people are often the butt of many jokes in movies and social media. So, you may feel bad about yourself and feel rejected. It's okay to lose weight to look fitter and avoid obesity. However, it's an issue when you're losing weight to be accepted by your loved ones. Friends who make you feel worthless because of your physique aren't worth your time.

Cyberbullying

If you've been a victim of cyberbullying, you'll never be a party to it. It can be devastating to be the target of numerous verbal attacks from different people around the world. It can ruin the individual's self-esteem and lead to suicidal ideation.

Unfortunately, many people face several backlashes online every day because of one reason or the other. The margin for error is slimmer in the modern world thanks to many destructive critics out there. They prefer to humiliate you rather than help you grow.



Social Comparison

Social comparison is inevitable when you're exposed to many extravagant people who like to display their wealth on social media. Unfortunately, many celebrities are fond of this ludicrous behavior. They forget that many people aren't enjoying the same privileged positions. Some of them do it in the guise of motivating others not to give up on their dreams. Nevertheless, these images paint a picture of life being devoid of happiness without luxurious lifestyles to many people. Meanwhile, this perception is a vague assessment of the meaning of life.

Digital Detox to the Rescue

Based on the DSM – 5, mental health experts don't regard tech and device overuse as a mental disorder. Nonetheless, it's evident that it's a behavioral addiction that can pose psychological, social, and physical health problems. So, you need to regulate the rate of your interaction with the digital world. You need a brief period when you refrain from using tech devices such as tablets, computers,

television, video games, and social media. This process is called digital detoxification.

Digital detox is a practical method of focusing on real-life conversations and interactions without distractions. Therefore, you need it to ensure that you don't use digital devices excessively such that you become addicted to them. You must not lose control over your life.

However, it's easy to allow other people's influences to affect you through the media. You can only determine the people who can have access to your life, but you cannot decide their impact. Therefore, it's crucial that you limit your exposure to negative influences by using social media responsibly.

An essential step in digital detox is to realize that you've a problem you need to solve. You don't have to wait until you're battling depression or anxiety before you act. Besides, it's a sign of maturity and taking responsibility when you've control over every aspect of your life. Your digital devices shouldn't be an exception. Note that digital detox goes beyond determination; you also need to be skillful about it. You'll learn the techniques of effective digital detox in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF MEDIA ADDICTION



Chapter 2 - The Negative Impacts of Media Addiction

It is increasingly popular to find people checking and scrolling through their phones or PCs to get regular updates of events across the world. Moreover, with various news media having social media profiles, many people depend on these platforms as their source of updates on events across the globe.

There's nothing wrong with leveraging the global reach of social media for news updates or business. Nonetheless, it is problematic when you cannot do without these platforms. Moreover, console games and other devices are excellent relaxation tools. However, it is also a challenge if you find it difficult to detach from your devices for games. Unreasonable use of your digital devices can affect you negatively. This chapter explores these adverse effects.

Weak Interpersonal Relationships

Undue attachment to your devices will affect your interpersonal relationships. Living your life more in the digital world can be disastrous as a parent or romantic partner. A perfect example of this maladaptive behavior is Andy Murray, a famous professional tennis player. In 2009, his coach, Brad Gilbert, explained that Murray's girlfriend left him because he was spending almost seven hours daily playing video games. His superstar status was not enough to save his relationship.

Many people think money and fame are all they need to sustain marital relationships. However, this isn't true. In the same way, parenting demands more than financial responsibility. Relationships demand quality time and attention. Giving someone your time is a demonstration of genuine love and affection. Addiction to your devices will ruin your interpersonal relationships because it will prevent you from giving your loved ones the requisite attention. Besides, you cannot build a robust relationship bond without spending time with them.

Procrastination

Many wonderfully crafted quotes on procrastination exist. According to Mark Twain, "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today." In a practical sense, this quote implies that you shouldn't waste time. You shouldn't wait until the next hour when you can do something right now. Meanwhile, you need excellent time management skills to achieve your goals in life. Moreover, procrastination will ensure that you do things in a hurry, which doesn't bode well for your efficiency.

Meanwhile, a major source of time-wasting in the modern world is digital devices. Social media platforms are full of juicy updates from your favorite users. If you're not careful, your intention to spend fifteen minutes can easily become an hour. One hour can quickly become two, and you'll end up shifting what you need to do to other times. This behavior can affect your plan for meetings, thereby making you late and ill-prepared for group discussions or presentations.

Average Job Performance

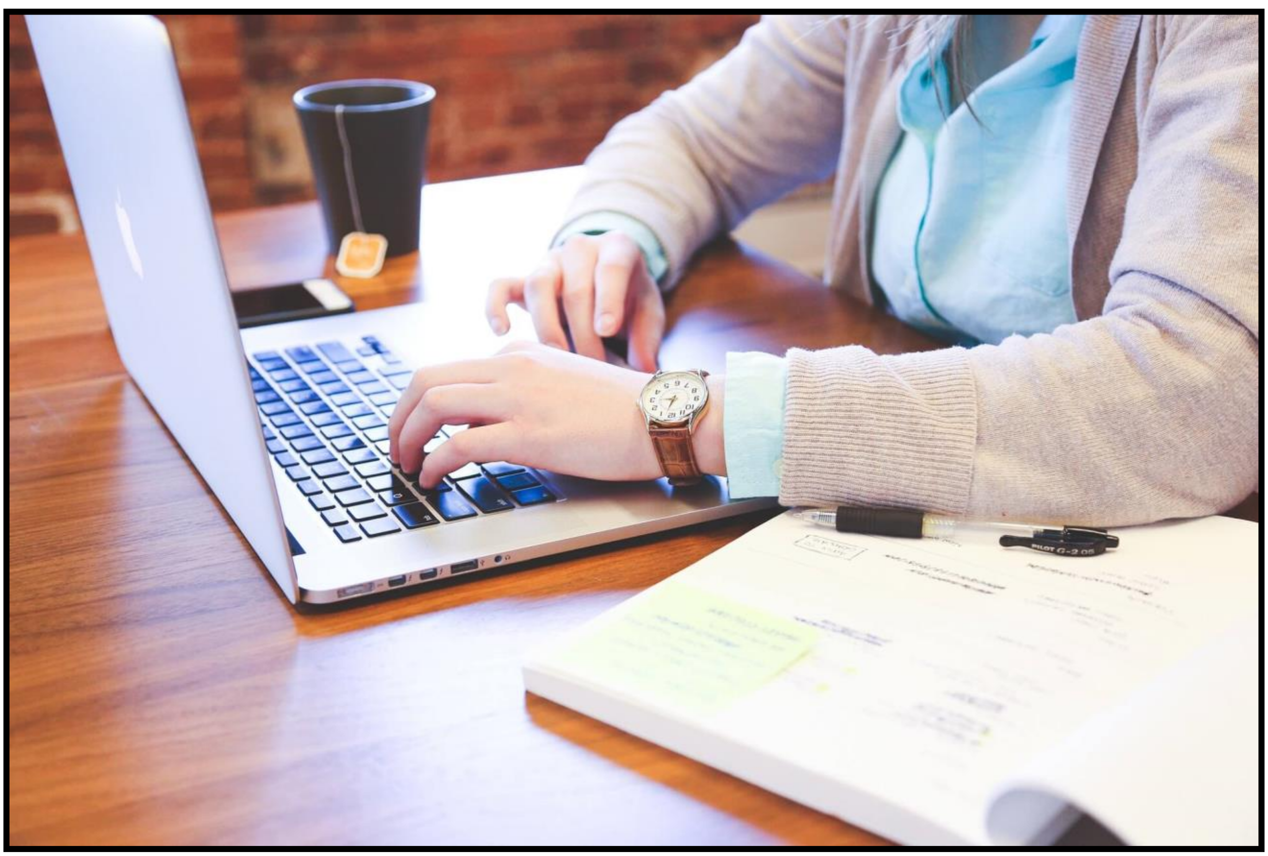
When you don’t regulate the way you use your devices, you’ll struggle to perform at an optimal level at work. It will be challenging for you to exemplify excellent work ethics, such as punctuality and meeting deadlines. Besides, you’ll have divided attention when working, which will affect your effectiveness. Your focus is critical to excellent performances in every life endeavor. So, you need to learn to keep your phone or tablet at bay when working.

Average job performance will limit your chances of being recommended for higher roles. Moreover, you can only dream of earning accolades like the employee of the year when you struggle to maintain your focus at work.

Excellence belongs to people who keep their gaze on their personal and professional objectives. In the long run, social media addiction can earn you a sack letter. It can make you lose coveted positions if you don’t curb it. It presents you as an immature individual who isn’t fit for sensitive roles.

Poor Work-Life Balance

You can only have an excellent work-life balance when you leave your work at the office. Leaving your work at the office still applies to remote workers who work from home. It implies that you'll focus on your work during work periods without distractions. In the same way, you'll not allow your job demands to affect your relationship with the people in your life. You'll not keep reminding your kids how busy you're when they want to spend time with you.



Meanwhile, a fantastic work-life balance isn't feasible when you distract yourself with digital devices while at work. You'll end up needing more time to meet your job demands. Needing more time to complete your professional tasks will make you work during the periods you ought to spend time with your family. If this behavior persists, it will strain your relationships.

Lack of Focus

It can be very challenging to maintain your focus in the modern world. So, many things are seeking your attention at the same time. Even when you're surfing the internet, you get various unsolicited adverts and suggestions. Besides, many websites are leveraging artificial intelligence to offer you personalized experiences. Therefore, you'll easily find things you'll find exciting on the internet. Nonetheless, you cannot afford to give your attention to everything you find attractive.

You must be able to choose to read a tantalizing article some other time when you're less busy. However, this approach is easier said

than done. Many people are fond of responding to chats or checking out exquisite images online during working hours. Some people would be checking their phones while having physical interactions with their friends. This lack of focus will affect your job performance and weaken the bond of your interpersonal relationships.

Low-Quality Social Interactions

It is prevalent to find people replacing physical interactions with virtual ones in recent times. Some people deceive themselves by saying that they have many friends because of the numerous people they chat with online. Physical interactions have elements you can never replicate in virtual conversations.

For example, maintaining eye contact and leveraging body language is absent in most online interactions. Anyone can be assertive when discussing with someone they can’t see physically.

Many people who have friends on social media platforms struggle to start or maintain friendships with the people around them.

Besides, spending a lot of time on your phone or in front of your PC will make it challenging to attend outdoor events. You'll have excuses for family picnics, friend hangouts, and other excellent platforms where you can bond with others. Using digital devices irresponsibly will also affect your time management skills, which can prevent you from creating time for outdoor events.

Physical Health – Dieting and Regular Exercise

Eating balanced diets consistently and regular exercise isn't for nerds or weird people. It takes discipline and commitment. It all begins with excellent time management skills. When you've self-control, you'll be able to restrict the time you spend on your devices.

This discipline will enable you to create time for maintaining good eating habits and regular exercise. When you spend excessive time in the digital world, you'll only eat whatever you find. You'll not be able to make good feeding plans.

Procrastination due to excessive digital devices use will also affect the way you exercise. You'll keep shifting the time you're supposed

to spend taking a walk or hitting the gym. Meanwhile, poor feeding habits and lack of regular exercise will affect your physical health. Remember that you'll only make the doctor richer when you don't take care of your health. So, it is imperative to detach from your screens to have time to take care of yourself.

Sleep

Social media addicts have a culture of sleeping late. They also often wake up early to check their phone. Besides, excessive exposure to your phone and PC screen can affect your sleep because of the light from these devices. Meanwhile, a lack of quality sleep, just like exercise and food, will affect your physical health. You need to sleep well to wake up full of vitality and vigor for your daily tasks. It isn't a good thing to feel jaded and exhausted because you've a poor sleeping habit.

CHAPTER 3

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AFFECTS YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH



Chapter 3 - How Social Media Addiction Affects Your Psychological Health

According to psychologists, five to ten percent of Americans have what qualifies as social media addiction. Just like other forms of addiction, it takes its toll on your performance in your everyday tasks. Meanwhile, failing to detach from the digital world once in a while has psychological effects. Here are some of the most common emotional issues associated with inappropriate use of digital devices:

Fear of Missing out (FOMO)

FOMO is social anxiety due to the belief that you're missing out while others are having fun. Due to this feeling, you'll want to stick continually with an activity to avoid this tension. Also, it is a fear or regret, which can make you have concerns that you might miss the opportunity to have a novel experience.

FOMO makes you feel that you're making the wrong choice by choosing not to participate in something. Note that this anxiety isn't restricted to social media addiction. Nonetheless, social networking makes you susceptible to FOMO. Social media platforms are full of endless exciting activities and events that can make you feel like you're missing out when you're not online.

Experts reckon that psychological dependence on social media can cause anxiety, which leads to FOMO. Note that this anxiety interferes with your psychological health and general well-being. You cannot focus during your daily tasks when you're battling FOMO. Your mind will keep drifting towards the comments and likes you could have been getting.

Depression

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 264 million people are suffering from depression worldwide. So, it is a prevalent condition that is ravaging many people in the world. You cannot take depression for granted because, at its peak, it can lead to suicidal ideations. The report from the WHO showed that

almost 800,000 people commit suicide every year around the world.



Note that depression is different from short-lived emotional responses to everyday challenges. Mood fluctuations are part and parcel of life. Nonetheless, depression is a different ball game. It can be moderate or severe. However, it can affect a person's family, work, or school life negatively. The WHO reckons that it's prevalent among people between the ages of 15 and 29. Meanwhile, these are the set of people that uses social media platforms the most.

These platforms are full of situations that can make you depressed. You can ruin your mood by comparing yourself with other people who you feel are doing better than you. You can also be depressed through your exposure to insensitive and damaging comments made by others about your looks or your post.

Anxiety

If you're conversant with social media, you'll notice that many people are fond of posting manipulated images. They leverage editing apps to make themselves look more beautiful or handsome than there are in reality. Interestingly, you might know that the pictures are edited, and they will still affect your mood. Also, you might know that many people only post about the highlights of their lives and rarely talk about their low moments and still feel bad.

Spending more time with your devices will increase your anxiety levels while physical interactions cause a reduction. Seeing the people who care about you eye-to-eye improves your mood. It makes you feel valued, and this reduces anxiety. So, you're risking

your psychological health when you prioritize interaction with digital devices over physical interactions.

Low Self-Esteem

According to an article by HelpGuide.org International, about ten percent of teenagers have been victims of cyberbullying. Social media empowers people to subject others to offensive comments without caring about how the person feels. Besides, many social media users are fond of spreading lies and rumors about other people. Many find happiness in saying demeaning things about others that can bring them down.

Once the damage is done, it becomes difficult to redeem a person's image. In some cases, such people find out that they have spread something they did not verify about a person. However, they will not use the same energy they used to spread the falsehood to spread the truth. Facts are boring but lies are intriguing and exciting. Unfortunately, social media platforms are hubs of misconceptions and manipulations.

Therefore, it is easy to lose your dignity and self-respect on these platforms. Many don't care about your age or social status when hurling abusive words at you. When the barrage is excessive, it can destroy your self-esteem. People that belong to minority groups such as blacks and Jews are often the target of uncensored racial slurs on these platforms.

PTSD Trigger

PTSD was discovered among war veterans, and it became a medical term in the 1980s. Dr. Pam Ramsden, a scientist at the University of Bradford, released the result of an insightful study in 2015. She surveyed 189 people regarding their reaction to a plethora of situations. She discovered that more than a fifth of the participants had high scores on clinical measures of PTSD. Interestingly, she exposed the respondents to pictures on social media.

Meanwhile, none of these participants had experienced these traumatic events previously. The result of this study is mind-blowing because it shows that you don't have to be at the war front to experience trauma related to such events. In the same way, you don't have to be involved in a miscarriage to feel what such people

go through. The participants were not diagnosed. Nonetheless, Dr. Ramsden argued that the result is evident.

According to her, if one of the participants had visited a hospital, he or she could be easily diagnosed with PTSD. Gone are those days when only the people going through traumatic events can personalize the experience. Social media platforms have made it possible to share disturbing and depressive images with other people worldwide. So, spending excessive time with your devices can make you experience trauma without having first-hand experience of the actual events.

Hive Mind

The hive mind seems to be more fictional than real. Nonetheless, social media abuse can create that semblance. You might have come across representations of the hive mind in fictional movies such as Star Trek. In the movie, the Borg assimilated intelligent species like humans into “the collective.” This process makes the organisms lose their individuality. It is some kind of telepathic connection where everyone in the group has similar thoughts.

Although social media doesn't have the same cynical outlook, we aren't far from it. The abundance of relentless updates exposes you to what other people are thinking, their location, and plans. Many people even share sensitive information, such as family issues, on this platform. Some celebrity couples even have hot exchanges on these platforms. If they end up settling their issues, they will also post it on social media.

The persistent barrage of information and ideas you receive from social media can make it difficult for you to reason as an individual. You can hate someone just because many people on the internet hate the person.

Football stars, for example, face heavy criticisms on social media because of unlimited access. You'll be surprised that the player in question has had many great performances. However, people often forget the good days during such days. Excessive use of these platforms can rob you of personal evaluation of personalities.

Low Emotional Intelligence

You cannot act beyond your exposure, knowledge, and the influence of the people around you. It is common on social media to find people who flare up at the slightest provocation. Disrespectful remarks and derogatory comments are the order of the day. You may see such behaviors as wrong initially. Nonetheless, you may find yourself acting that way in no time.

Virtues such as patience, respect, honor, dignity, discipline, etc. are no longer in vogue. The moral decadence of our societies is on display in its most gory details on social media platforms. If you don't "disconnect" once in a while, you'll be absorbed into this appalling culture. Contrary to popular opinion, keeping your cool in the heat of the moment isn't outdated.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION



Chapter 4 - What Research Says About Social Media Addiction

Most of the adverse effects of excessive use of digital devices that have been mentioned so far might sound reasonable. Nonetheless, it is always better to trust scientific evidence. So, this chapter will focus on studies on this malaise to solidify its existence and dangerous impacts.

Technology can Create Tension

Many people in the modern world find it difficult to imagine a world without the tech devices we've today. Indeed, technological advancements have made life easier, sleeker, and smarter. Nonetheless, it comes with a price. People in the Stone Age would be envious of the technological achievements and breakthroughs of this generation. However, it remains debatable if they will exchange their tranquility for our exciting but stressful devices.

Meanwhile, technological advancements and peace of mind aren't mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, many people have one of the two in the 21st century. According to a survey by the American Psychological Association, 18% of US adults believe that technology use is a significant source of stress in their lives. Many of these people wish that they don't have to put up with the constant need to check texts, emails, and social media daily.



More so, researchers in Sweden conducted a study to seek the opinion of young adults on the use of digital devices. They discovered that heavy technology use contributed to increased

stress levels and symptoms of depression. This study also revealed that excessive digital device use is a mitigating factor against quality sleep. So, you need to be moderate with the way you use these devices to avoid physical and mental exhaustion. Note that you cannot be at your best in your daily activities when you're overwhelmed by tension.

Digital Devices Can Cause Sleep Problems

It is commonsensical to expect excessive use of digital devices to affect sleep quality. Nonetheless, research has also established a link between social media use and sleep. For example, Caitlyn Fuller led a group of scientists to investigate the impact of digital devices on sleep. The study involved 234 children who were within ages 8 to 17 years. Their parents were surveyed to measure inattentive behavior, sleep hours, and hours of technology use.

The researchers discovered that the children who are fond of using multiple technology forms at midnight had less quality sleep. They also observed that digital device use was associated with an

elevated body mass index. However, this study did not discover a link between technology use and inattention. The authors recommended that clinicians should educate their patients about the negative impacts of technology at bedtime to help them get improved sleep.

In another study, the researchers noticed that in-bed electronic social media use affects sleep and mood negatively. The scientists discovered that 70% of the participants checked updates on social media on their phones while in bed. Also, 15% spent an hour or more while in bed on social media. The result showed that using social media in bed increases your chances of shorter sleep duration, insomnia, and anxiety.

Social Media Addiction Can Lead to Mental Problems

Many factors affect your psychological health. Heavy daily technology use is one of them. In 2017, a group of researchers explored subsequent and concurrent associations between digital technology use and adolescents' mental health. The study involved 151 adolescents who were at risk of mental health problems. They

completed a baseline assessment and an 18-month follow-up assessment. Also, they went through a 30-day ecological momentary assessment.

The result of this study established a link between the times spent using digital technologies and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The researchers found that the number of text messages sent affected ADHD symptoms that same day. Besides, it also caused conduct disorder symptoms. The ecological momentary assessment showed that technology use led to poorer self-regulation. It also increased conduct problem symptoms.

Scientists from the University of Pennsylvania also published a similar result. They discovered that the use of Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook decreased psychological well-being. Meanwhile, they observed that limiting digital device use decreased the symptoms of loneliness and depression.

Excessive Connectivity Affects Work/Life Balance

It becomes challenging to create boundaries between your work life and home life when you're always connected. It gets so bad for some people that they struggle to enjoy their vacations with their loved ones because they often check their emails during those periods. Some people will be responding to a text from a colleague or checking their social media accounts. The people around you can feel unappreciated when you have this culture.

In 2013, Taewoo Nam investigated the effect of technology use and work-life balance. The result of this study suggested that internet and mobile technology use affects the types, dimensions, and consequences of work-life balance. Dimensions refer to permeability and flexibility, while types include interference, segmentation, and integration. Meanwhile, the consequences involve job stress, job satisfaction, and overwork.

Therefore, this study reveals that the adverse effects of technology use can lead to poor job satisfaction and lead to mental and physical exhaustion. The author explained that technology use affects your perception of flexibility and permeability regarding the balance

between your life and work. Therefore, a digital detox could help you have a less stressful and healthier work-life balance.

Digital Connectivity Can Create Anxiety

The most prevalent anxiety disorder linked to social media use is FOMO. It is a tension that involves feeling that you're missing the experiences others are enjoying. It is the reason you want to keep checking your phone even when you're at work or interacting with your friend and family members. Constant connectivity strengthens the fear that your life is out of place and left behind.

You'll keep checking your device because you don't want to miss an essential post or text. A group of researchers examined the prevalence, consequences, and dynamics of experiencing FOMO in 2018. The participants were all university students.

Results showed that students experience this anxiety later in the day or week, especially when studying or working. Moreover, students with frequent experiences of FOMO often have negative outcomes, both daily and over the course of the semester.

Such students suffer from stress, fatigue, decreased sleep, and physical symptoms. Therefore, you need a digital detox to stop feeling cut off from the digital world when you're not connected. You'll realize that you can have a quality life without constant connection to the virtual world, thereby reducing your fears and anxiety levels.

Social Comparison can Limit Contentment

Social comparison can be upward or downward. In upward social comparison, you'll look at people who are better than you to feel inspired and hopeful. Meanwhile, downward social comparison involves looking down at people who you feel are in worse situations to feel good about yourself. These comparisons can be positive, but they can also affect your happiness and increase your stress levels.

Social media opens you up to endless social comparisons. You can see the profiles of millions of people all over the world. Some of them are your friends and families, while some are celebs and strangers. You may start feeling that they are living richer, fuller, and more exciting lives because of the microscopic and curated

view of Instagram and Facebook posts. Your self-esteem and contentment are at risk when you keep measuring the quality of your life by looking at other people.

According to a 2006 study, social comparison can lead to destructive emotions and behaviors. The study showed a link between social comparison and envy, regret, guilt, and defensiveness. It can also make people lie, have unmet cravings, and blame others for their predicaments. Social comparison can also affect your job satisfaction and self-esteem, according to the authors.

CHAPTER 5

SIGNS YOU NEED DIGITAL DETOX



Chapter 5 - Writings on the Wall: Signs you Need Digital Detox

You may need to visit a professional to discover that you need a digital detox. However, you can know by being observant and objective. This chapter explores the ominous signs that show you need a digital detox.

Not Holding your Phone Makes you Anxious

Once you start using a phone, it becomes difficult to imagine not using one. Meanwhile, you had a life when you never had one. You were happy and lived a fulfilling life when you did not possess a phone. Indeed, having access to digital devices can make life easier.

It has countless benefits, such as access to quality and timely information and instant contact with your loved ones. Nonetheless, it isn't true that you cannot be happy without your digital device. It

is a severe issue if you realize that you're anxious whenever you're not holding your phone.

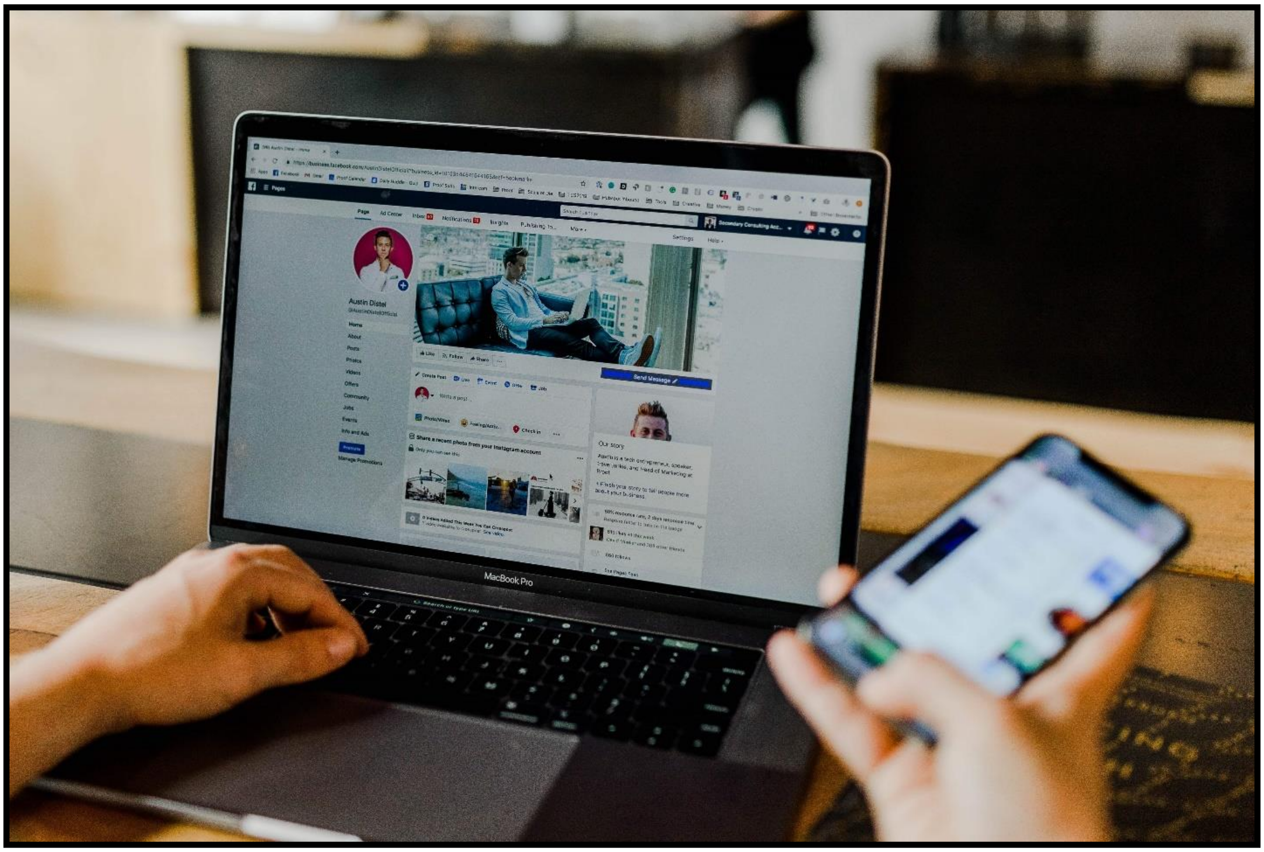
You should also not see it as normal if you're feeling like the world is crashing when your phone is switched off. You need to stay off your devices for a while to realize that you can be happy without them. Deliberately leave your phone behind or switch it off when you're with your friends or family members. It makes them feel special and loved when you do it in front of them.

Likes, Comments, and Reshare Mean the World to you

We all feel valued when people make positive remarks about us. Social media platforms make it easy to get pleasant comments from various people around the world. It can also be in the form of likes and reshare. Naturally, people liking your posts or resharing them improves your mood. Nonetheless, you need to be careful about the value you place on such gestures.

Life isn't always the way you want it. There will be days when you'll make mistakes and can be a victim of cyberbullying. You'll be

surprised to find out the same people praising you will be the first to criticize you. In the words of Lecrae, "If you live for people's acceptance, you'll die from their rejection."



You need to prepare your mind for the days when people will criticize you. Many people on social media are fair-weather friends. They will pounce on your flaws and make you feel worthless during difficult moments. Therefore, your sense of value must come from within. If you discover that likes and positive comments can ruin your day, you need to disconnect for some time.

You're Scared You'll miss Something if you stop Checking your Phone

You'll miss so many things when you're not using your phone. In most cases, you may need to play catch-up to be up to date again. It is good to be conversant with events across the globe. Besides, it is a sign of smartness when you're versatile across various spheres of life.

However, it is a problem when you're anxious because you feel you're missing out on happenings around the world. You should be able to go a day without checking your social media accounts. Nonetheless, when you feel like a fish out of water because you're not checking your phone, you need to act fast.

The quality of your life shouldn't depend on you checking your phone. You should be able to have hobbies you enjoy. There should be other activities in your life that can make you engrossed without thinking about happenings in the digital world. If you don't have activities like this, you need to limit technology device use.

You Usually Stay Late or Wake Early to use Your Phone

As earlier mentioned, technology use can affect your sleep quality. It can also have adverse effects on your sleep quantity. There are many reasons you stay late or wake too early. For example, if you're anxious about your performance in a task the following day, you may not sleep early. An unsettled mind will keep you awake.

If you're not sleeping well because you're anxious and stressed, you may need to consider practicing mindfulness. However, if the reason you're not getting enough sleep is that you're using your phone, you need a digital detox.

You should avoid keeping late nights chatting or reading posts. If you're struggling to do this, you need to disconnect from the digital world for a while. It is critical to tell yourself that you're in charge. When you cannot control your technology device use, you've lost control. You need to seize control again by living without them for a while.

You've Attention Issues Because you often Check your Phone

Whatever takes away your focus has wrested control from you. According to George Lucas, "Always remember your focus determines your reality." Indeed, many things in your life can affect your attention span. You may be struggling to cope with job demands because you've marital issues. Financial challenges, such as paying your bills, can also affect your focus.

However, you need a digital detox if you find it challenging to focus as a student or employee because of digital devices. If you're fond of always checking your phone, it will affect your attention, and this will be detrimental to your progress and performance. One of the studies that have been evaluated showed that technology device use increases ADHD symptoms.

You Check your Phone Every few Minutes

Your journey to liberation begins with self-evaluation. Notice how many times you check your phone within fifteen minutes. Of course, there might be situations that warrant checking your phone

constantly. For example, a friend or colleague may promise to send you a text you need to respond to urgently. However, it is an issue when you check your phone randomly to avoid missing out on new updates.

You're not Happy Because of the time you Spend on Social Media

In some cases, the people around you can tell you that you're spending too much time on your phone. Their view may be objective or not. Nonetheless, your activity on social media can be excessive such that you'll be unhappy with yourself. You'll feel stressed and depressed because you feel like you're losing control. When you get to that point in your life, you need a digital detox.

Holidays aren't an excuse to spend most parts of your day in the digital world. You can use these periods to read books, play sports, or engage in a hobby. Visiting old friends or going out with your family is also an excellent choice. Besides, you can spend those periods acquiring new skills or developing yourself. You can also exercise more when you're less busy rather than just waste your time playing games or visiting social media sites.

CHAPTER 6

BENEFITS OF DISCONNECTING TO RECONNECT



Chapter 6- Benefits of Disconnecting to Reconnect

Whatever is excessive cannot be beneficial, and technology use is no different. When you use digital devices moderately, you've so much to gain. This chapter explores these advantages.

Quality Physical Health

Physical health is a combination of different factors. Indeed, genetic factors and family history contributes to your physical health. Nonetheless, you have a lot to do to ensure that your health does not deteriorate. Moreover, your lifestyle plays a vital role in determining how frequently you will visit the doctor. If you are careless with your feeding habit and exercise, you will weaken your immune system.

According to Statista, 71% of Americans believe they could eat better. Meanwhile, only 29% have made an effort to improve their feeding habits in the last year. These stats show that although many Americans believe that they need to improve on their feeding habits, only a few ever make an effort to change their lifestyle in this aspect. One of the ways you can improve your feeding habit is by cutting down on technology device use.

Statista revealed that only 19% of Americans buy groceries at farmer's markets for home-cooked meals. Note that buying from these sources guarantees cooking with healthy ingredients that will nourish your body. Nonetheless, how can you have time to visit such locations when you spend a considerable part of your time on social media?

Excellent Mental Health

It is difficult to separate mental and physical health, even though they aren't the same. Your physical health can affect your mental health and vice versa. For example, when you are sick, you can become depressed. In the same way, if you are suffering from

depression, you will not do many things that help maintain your physical health.

Depression will affect your eating habit and also the rate at which you exercise. If you have a culture of visiting a gym, you will not want to go when you aren't happy. In the long run, your physical health will start deteriorating because you aren't maintaining your fitness. Meanwhile, unrestrained digital device use will affect both your physical and mental health.

However, if you stay off these devices when you should, you will be able to keep your sanity. You will reduce your chances of suffering from psychological disorders such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and ADHD. Besides, you will improve your chances of having a high self-esteem. You will also be able to wade off the negative vibes that come with social comparison.

Robust Interpersonal Relationship

Relationships are built on simple but powerful foundations. Time and attention are the core pillars that hold every functioning

relationship. Moreover, relationships die a natural death when they are starved of the requisite attention. If you think about the people that used to be your friends at some time, you will realize that you are no longer in tune because you don't have time for each other anymore.

Note that you only have twenty-four hours in a day. Many people wish that they have more than that. Nonetheless, when you start feeling that you need more than twenty-four hours for your day, it is an ominous sign that all is not well. It shows that you've horrible time-management skills. You need to take out time to rearrange your priority. It shows that you've been giving your time to things that are less productive.

Unfortunately, excessive use of technology is one of the main reasons some people don't have time for their loved ones. The sad story of Andy Murray and his former girlfriend was earlier cited as an example of how digital devices can ruin your relationship. A digital detox can go a long way in helping you fill the gap these devices have created between you and your loved ones.

Effective Work/Life Balance

Remote working is gaining prominence because of its numerous advantages. One of the reasons many people will prefer to work from home is so that they can improve their work/life balance. According to a survey by Accel and Qualtrics, 66%percent of millennials are willing to take a pay-cut to work remotely. This shows that many employees are frustrated with their struggles with work-life balance in a traditional team.

Nonetheless, the inability of some people to maintain a healthy balance between their work and family life is because of their uncensored use of digital devices. It is challenging enough to be a parent and work a job at the same time. You cannot afford to complicate the situation more by not restricting the time you spend in the digital work.

Many people who work in a traditional office have excellent work-life balance. There are many people who have similar responsibilities as yours who still excel at home and at work. So, the issue often is not where and when you work but how you manage your schedules.

Superb Performance in Everyday Task

A digital detox will enable you to have the clear head needed to draw good plans and make quality decisions. Meanwhile, you need a clear head and a calm mind to devise strategies for more productivity. There are many things you can practice that can help you prepare better and execute your projects successfully. Keeping a journal is one of such productive activities that can help you evaluate your life and make better decisions.



Nevertheless, you cannot be faithful in keeping a journal when you have poor time management skills. One of the reasons you will not be able to keep a journal is spending too much time with your phone and other devices. You've more than enough games and posts to keep you occupied all day long. So, it takes deliberate effort to take out time to update your journal.

Taking that bold and remarkable step to stay away from the "noise" of social media will improve your efficiency. You will be able to keep your focus when receiving instructions about a task for precise execution. Successful people stand out among others because they do what most people don't do. They know when to withdraw from the crowd and create strategies for monumental achievements. You can do that by limiting your use of technology devices.

More Time for Hobbies

On the surface, saying playing video games or visiting social media is your hobby sounds nice. However, it can be dangerous because it shows that you enjoy spending more time alone than being with your loved ones. It is not a problem to have times when you are

alone and just enjoy the company of yourself. Nonetheless, it is a sign of social withdrawal when you do that often.

Limiting your use of digital devices will help you create time for productive hobbies such as volunteering in a humanitarian group. Some people accept responsibilities so that people will perceive them as a good person. This motive is hypocrisy because such people accept such roles only to struggle with other aspects of their life.

Nevertheless, with excellent time management skills, you can work a job, have a family, and still be a part of a non-profit organization. Start by reducing the time you spend on social media, and you may be surprised that you've always had time all along. Once you get your priorities right, you can create time for many satisfying hobbies.

CHAPTER 7

RECONNECTING TO YOUR TRUE SELF BY ELIMINATING MEDIA PRESSURE



Chapter 7 - Reconnecting to your true self by Eliminating Media Pressure

Tabula Rasa is a phenomenon in philosophy that was made popular by John Locke in 1690 in his essay “Concerning Human Understanding. However, scholars have been arguing about this concept since the days of Aristotle. It is a belief that humans are born as babies with minds that are like blank slates. In other words, we become who we are because of the influences we are exposed to in our societies.

You may argue with this idea, but you cannot deny the vital role the influences around you have in your life. It is more challenging to restrict the things that affect you in the modern world, thanks to your connectivity to social media. Nonetheless, you need to be watchful to ensure that you retain your individuality, uniqueness, and self-worth outside of these platforms. This chapter will expose you to essential tips that will help you stay true to yourself.

Recognize Technology use Addiction Symptoms

The first step towards reconnecting to yourself is discovering that you are losing your identity in an ocean of influences. Do you get more angry or feel more worthless in recent times? If yes, what is triggering these negative emotions? You need to take out time and ask yourself such questions. If you don't discover the source of your irritation, you cannot manage your annoyance and frustration.

It does not take long to lose self-worth or job satisfaction. All you need is to surround yourself with materialistic people who measure their value based on their possessions. So, you need to guide against the kind of influences you have in your life. The signs that show you need a digital detox have been explored in previous chapters. Look at them one after the other and notice if you have these symptoms.

If you realize that you are struggling to be at your best at home or at work because of technology use addiction, you need to withdraw. Don't let this attention-grabbing world make you lose yourself in its vanities. Restructure your priorities and give your attention to what matters to you the most.

Identify Limiting and Destructive Thoughts

You don't need to do anything to have negative vibes and destructive thoughts. All you need is to leave your mind on "auto-pilot mode" to fill it with depressive ideas. Therefore, you need to take charge of the thoughts that run through your mind. Meanwhile, you cannot have destructive ideas if you've not been exposed to them. So, by limiting your use of social media, you can have more control over your thoughts.

For example, exposure to insensitive celebrities who flaunt their luxurious lifestyle can affect your self-esteem. It can be harmless initially because you may feel inspired to pursue your dreams. Indeed, it is commendable to think big and have mindboggling ambitions. Many rags-to-riches stories of different people in history can inspire you not to give up on your dreams.

However, you shouldn't feel that you don't deserve to be respected and loved until you achieve your objectives. If you have people around you who mistreat you because you aren't wealthy and famous, they don't deserve to be your friends. Meanwhile, you may be getting this treatment from your social media contacts. You should avoid such pages, posts, or profiles.

Eliminate Distractions

Distractions can come in various ways and can be in various forms. It's not every distraction that is negative. Some things that demand your attention are attractive but unprofitable in the context of your goals. For example, if you are preparing for an exam as a student, watching a football match is fun if you are an enthusiast of the sport.

However, it is unproductive because it does not contribute to your success in the exam. In the same way, you need to identify distractions in every aspect of your life and limit them. Note that you cannot recognize distractions to your dreams if you don't have clearly defined objectives. For that student, his or her goal is academic success, and that is why watching a football game becomes a distraction, especially close to the exam period.

You need to sit down and set specific goals to make it easy for you to identify unprofitable activities. Note that every objective is not long-term. You can have short-term goals, such as completing a project in two days for your company. The urgency of the work should make you limit the frequency at which you use your devices.

Checking your phone every few minutes during that period will only lead to an average performance.

Place Value on Yourself Outside of Media Construct

Remember the hive mind concept, which makes an individual forfeit his or her uniqueness. One of the worst things that can happen to a person is to lose his or her identity while trying to please others. It is easy to dance to the tune of social media influencers. When you realize how much the ideas on these platforms are affecting your decision-making, you will be surprised.

Both explicit and implicit adverts in the media affect your buying culture. Several studies have proven that many people buy “names” rather than quality. In some cases, other brands have superior quality products, but you will not buy from them. Rather, you will buy from a popular brand because many people online are talking about it.

Unfortunately, many people don't realize that some of these companies pay people to say positive things about them. So, to base your sense of value on media construct is a wrong approach that can hurt you in many ways.

Be Productive

You have to put pressure on yourself to be the best you can be. You should have goals you want to achieve. However, you shouldn't try to achieve anything to prove a point to anyone. It is natural that people will criticize you because they don't understand you. Nonetheless, you shouldn't dismiss every criticism.

You should improve in areas when you need to get better. However, you shouldn't try to achieve success to prove that you aren't a failure. Don't try to achieve your dreams so that you can post it on social media. If that is your motive, you might become desperate. Meanwhile, desperation will increase your frustrations, especially during tough periods.

You might end up using the wrong means to achieve your goals because you want to get likes and positive comments at all costs.

Do things that make you happy and be happy with your progress without using the lenses of other people.

Practice Gratitude



Practicing gratitude is a meditational principle. Loving-kindness is one of the forms of meditation. This meditation type involves thinking about the splendid things about your life, such as your family and fantastic relationships. You should have this

commendable practice. You should take time to focus on the things that are valuable in your life.

It is easy to focus on the things you don't have and forget the enviable parts of your life. Many people wish they are in your shoes. Nonetheless, media pressure can make you feel worthless because you don't drive an exotic car.

There's nothing wrong with living large if you can afford it. However, you shouldn't attach your value as an individual to your possessions. Be grateful for your health, cordial relationships, beautiful weather, etc. This practice will enable you to generate positive energy and boost your mental health.

CHAPTER 8

VITAL TIPS TO HACK YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES USE ADDICTION



Chapter 8 - Vital Tips to Hack Your Digital Devices use Addiction

So far, the detrimental effects of unrestrained use of technology devices have been highlighted. The benefits have also been identified. Therefore, it makes perfect sense to end this book by giving you helpful tips that will help you in your bid to restrict your use of your gadgets. These tips will empower you to disconnect when you need to and reconnect to your true identity.

Be Practical

It's possible to do a complete digital detox sometime. The feeling is liberating and refreshing. Nonetheless, some people can stay off using their devices for a while, but this is not practicable for many people. For example, you may need to be online a lot because of your job or other obligations.

It is also possible that you are living far away from your family, and you need to stay in touch a lot through digital communication. If

you are in that situation, you cannot completely disconnect. However, you can still do a digital detox. Choose a plan that is compatible with your schedule. For example, you can choose to stop checking your phone when you are in bed.

Don’t Overrate Yourself

Start your digital detox without overrating yourself. Remove anything that can tempt you to check your phone. For example, you should turn off notifications for social media apps like Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, etc. You should also do the same for news websites that send alerts about a new post.

Avoid checking your social media account or websites for new posts. Rather, you should set a specific amount of time you spend on reading posts in a day. You should also respond to comments and react to responses during that time. It can be within twenty to thirty minutes. The most important thing is to stick with the plan.

One Step at a Time

It's excellent if you can stay off digital connection for days. Nevertheless, it may not be practicable. So, you can start your journey to digital detox by starting with some specific apps you visit too frequently. For example, you can choose to start with your Facebook app.

Regarding setting time, rather than begin by setting out thirty minutes for visiting social media, you can start by ruling out the early part of the day. You may allow yourself to only use these apps in the evening. When you enjoy the progress, you can make it more restricted.

Place Limits

You may not be able to completely disconnect because of the nature of your daily routine. Nonetheless, you need to place limits on the time digital connections can intrude into your activities. Setting limits is good for your mental and physical health.

When you don't have limits, you make yourself prone to all the negative impacts of overwhelming exposure to these devices. Set restrictions by focusing on the apps you need per time. For example, you may want to play music with your phone during your workout. In that situation, you can put the phone on airplane mode to avoid being distracted by calls, texts, or app notifications.

Digital Fast

In the same way, some people have a food fast, you can do the same with your digital devices. You can give up all digital devices for a day or even a week. You can do this intermittently, especially whenever you realize that you are excessive with the way you use your devices.

As earlier mentioned, you shouldn't surrender your life's control to technology. You need to be disciplined enough to say "no" to your use of any device. Once your craving to be online overwhelms you, you've another master in your life, which shouldn't happen. Digital fasts give the steering wheel to the right driver – you.

A Day Off

Make your digital detox seamless by having a particular day of the week when you don't use your devices. Of course, you should look for a day when it is not likely you've any essential message you need to read.

Going a whole day without visiting the digital world will empower you to cut down more on technology use when necessary. If you can stay off a whole day, it will not be too difficult to reduce your social media use to some minutes of a day.

Be Accountable

Carrying some people along in your new journey can help you stick with your resolve. For example, you can tell your spouse that you will not be online for a certain day in the week. This approach will help you to stay focused.

You will not want him or her to see you checking your phone on that day, and that will help you to stick to the plan. Telling other people about your decision can also inspire them to do the same.

When the people around you choose to do the same thing, you will have more sources of motivation.

Visit Friends and Families More



A digital fast works best when you replace using your devices with other meaningful activities. If you stay off social media without engaging yourself productively, the decision cannot last. Before you

think about staying off the digital world, you should think about the activities you will do instead.

For example, during the day you choose not to use your devices, you can visit your friend and families. You can replace the virtual interaction with physical communication. You can also consider joining a club or a volunteer group to engage yourself when you are less busy.

Limit Easy Access to Social Media Apps

Turning off notifications can limit your use of social media apps. Nonetheless, it may not be effective if you are a chronic user. You may have to delete the apps and reinstall them later when you are more confident to limit their use. If it’s a video game, you can give it to your friends for a while and get it back when you are ready to apply more caution.

Keep Track of Your Progress

Don't feel like you are punishing yourself when doing a digital detox. Besides, you shouldn't do it out of guilt. Enjoy the process by keeping track of your progress. You can also share your success with your friends and families.

Conclusion

Knowledge is useless when it has no practical application. The knowledge you've received from this book should improve the quality of your life. Nonetheless, you cannot get better if you don't apply what you've learned.

Make plans for your digital detox and follow it through. Be generous enough to share these ideas with your loved ones. However, you should practice what you've learned before sharing with others. Be a sterling example of how digital detox can transform a person's life.